

BOOK REVIEWS

THE WESTERN JOURNAL OF MEDICINE does not review all books sent to it by the publishers. A list of new books received is carried in the Advertising Section.

THE NEUROPSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE—

Joseph H. Rosenthal, MD, Director, Learning Disabilities Clinic, Department of Pediatrics, Kaiser-Permanente Medical Center, Oakland; Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of California, San Francisco. Nelson-Hall Inc., Publishers, 325 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL (60606), 1977. 168 pages, \$12.95.

The physician who finds himself increasingly interested and involved in the sometimes unsatisfactory school and preschool learning experiences of his young patients will find that Dr. Rosenthal has reviewed, digested and evaluated an immense amount of the literature and research on language development. It is not a how-to-do-it book, but Dr. Rosenthal is a pediatrician who believes that the starting point is a careful history (including believing a parent who thinks something is wrong) and physical examination.

The extensions of that history and physical examination that make them meaningful for the child with language problems are clarified and put into perspective, though not detailed, and the background material that other disciplines working in the fields of learning and language work from is presented and their language decoded.

The development of language, including not only early man but other species (even bees do it), is presented and its importance to developing infants and children discussed. The relationship of language to mastery of self and environment, and the devastating effects that cognitive and sensory deficits have in early life are appropriately emphasized.

Pertinent reviews of known genetics, neurophysiology, learning theories, and clinical and anecdotal material are presented, some in detail that will be of more interest to the specializing student than to the clinician.

There are useful reviews of what little is known about some of the nontraditional approaches that keep popping up, and that lay people seem to know more about and have more faith in than physicians. The latter tend to like to know what they are doing before they do it, even when it seems to help.

Recent law mandates education for all of the handicapped. It is essential that physicians be informed child advocates who can monitor their patients and families through the increasing involvement with the educational establishment and the learning and language specialists who are the guardians of the resources that evaluate and remediate many of the handicaps. Dr. Rosenthal's book will be a useful addition to the library of the physician who wishes to understand in depth the language handicapped child, whether seriously impaired or a "slow learner," and a "must" for the serious student.

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SKIN SURGERY—Fourth Edition—Edited by Ervin Epstein, MD, Associate Clinical Professor of Dermatology, University of California, San Francisco; Chief of Dermatology and Syphilology at Highland-Alameda County Hospital, Oakland; Consultant to Oakland Area Veterans' Hospital; and Ervin Epstein, Jr., MD, Assistant Clinical Professor of Dermatology, Assistant Research Dermatologist, University of California, San Francisco; Consultant to Oakland Area Veterans' Hospital. Charles C Thomas, Publisher, 301-327 East Lawrence Ave., Springfield, IL, (62717), 1976. 839 pages, \$98.75.

The fourth edition of *Skin Surgery* is an expanded and generally upgraded version of the 1970 third edition. It represents the combined effort of 43 contributors and

the editors, encompassing 51 chapters. It is multidisciplinary in its approach; it represents the input of authorities not only in dermatology and plastic surgery, but also in a variety of surgical specialties.

The editors have held rather loose reins over the contributors with resultant advantages and disadvantages. An advantage is that each chapter is written in an independent manner by an acknowledged author in his field of expertise. As might be expected, there is some overlapping of subject material by the writers of different disciplines. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, for it provides the reader with more than one point of view, more than one approach, to the same problem.

A greater degree of editorial control over the nature and quantity of the contents might have been an asset. Starting with "Max the Knife," a poem of questionable taste for the stature of this book, and ending with "Do It Yourself" Instruments, such as measuring spoons and cake decorators, some editorial surgery was in order. In particular, the chapters on maxillofacial prosthetics, perfusion techniques, and extensive surgical procedures of male genitalia, are not in the scope of practicing dermatologists. "Surgical alternatives" such as therapy with x-ray, 5-fluorouracil, and topical nitrogen mustard were given appropriate short shrift, treatment that similarly should have been given to immunotherapy and topical cytotoxic therapy. "Superficial chemosurgery" was summarized in 60 pages and probably could have been condensed. The whole chemosurgical terminological conundrum is perpetuated herein and needs final resolution.

The quality of the book as regards the binding, readability of the print and pictures (with some exceptions) is good.

Despite the relatively limited adverse criticisms, *Skin Surgery* clearly stands alone as the reference book for anyone with an interest in cutaneous surgery. I believe that it belongs in the personal library of all dermatologists, in practice or in training. No one dermatologist will agree with all of its approaches, but as a "shotgun" approach it provides something for everyone.

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ANGINA PECTORIS—Edited by Desmond G. Julian, MD, FRCP, British Heart Foundation Professor of Cardiology, University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Churchill Livingstone—Medical Division of Longman Inc., 19 West 44th St., New York City (10036), 1977. 272 pages, \$25.00.

Among recently published books, multiauthored monographs dealing with a single disease or subject occupy a prominent place. This is to some extent due to the fact that so many postgraduate programs are being taped and edited for publication. Consequently, such a popular and controversial subject as coronary artery disease has been amply covered in the past few years.

This monograph was published in England, under the editorship of a well-known student of ischemic heart disease. It consists of 13 chapters, five of which are written by American authors, one by a Swedish author and the remainder by authors from the British Isles—with a heavy contribution from Scotland. The arrangement of the book is conventional. The first chapter provides an historical introduction by M. B. Matthews, which is interesting in that it includes some details of early recog-

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nition of coronary artery disease, which are not generally known. Epidemiology is dealt with by M. F. Oliver. Pathological features of angina are presented by W. C. Roberts. The chapter on clinical diagnosis (M. B. Matthews) is very well written, with considerable detail given to the presentation of varieties of chest pain, the influence of various factors upon pain and the differentiation of anginal pain from other forms of pain. The chapter on physical examination, written by J. K. Perloff, is presented with the usual clarity. E. Varnauskas reviews exercise testing comprehensively and well. The following chapters include discussions of myocardial perfusion (Resnikov), hemodynamics (Friesinger) and angiocardiology (Griffith and Aschuff). Treatment is covered by Lorimer (medical therapy) and by Balcon, Caves and Stinson (surgical therapy).

In a subject as widely covered by books, monographs and review articles as is angina pectoris it is difficult to find anything presenting new approaches or information. This book presents a collection of well-written articles by well-chosen essayists. The approach is clinical with emphasis on practical aspects of coronary disease and with avoidance of controversial aspects. The volume is attractively printed and well illustrated. The bibliography is adequate without being encyclopedic. It is altogether a useful book for practicing physicians, more a practical guideline than a reference volume.

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PIAGETIAN THEORY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HELPING PROFESSIONS: Emphasis—The Handicapped Child—Proceedings Sixth Interdisciplinary Conference: Co-sponsored by University Affiliated Program, Childrens Hospital of Los Angeles and the University of Southern California School of Education. USC Special Order Department & Bookstore, University of Southern California University Park, Los Angeles (90007), 1977. 462 pages, \$10.00 (Paperback).

Piagetian concepts and strategies are enjoying widespread adaptation as tools for cognitive development and enhancement and, therefore, this volume is a timely contribution.

The first portion of this volume deals specifically with handicapped children. Reports of the effects of piagetian strategies with groups such as mentally retarded persons and visually handicapped learners (Swallow) and emotionally disturbed children (Lubin) are included along with the results of piagetian-based cognitive assessment with young exceptional children (Poulsen) and young disturbed children (Delany, Fitzpatrick).

The remainder of the proceedings, though eluding categorical definition, cover a wide assortment of piagetian related topics. For example, the four stages of cognitive development as given by Piaget—sensory motor, preoperational, concrete and formal operations—are examined.

Notwithstanding, it should be pointed out that not all contributors uniformly endorse the use of piagetian-constructs as models for curriculum development. Interestingly, Gaudia notes that "less than one tenth of 1 percent of Piaget's enormous literary outpourings even deal with the topic of education." Piaget's predominant involvement has traditionally resided in the philosophic realm of genetic epistemology. Murray cautions that "the only possible education recommendation from a theory such as Piaget's is that schools should simulate 'natural' human development" and "should not ignore the theoretical ambiguities."

Therefore, the topics of some sixty papers amassed here extend from investigative research with diverse pop-

ulations of children, to projects comparing the cognitive development of normal and exceptional groups of pupils using piagetian-based criterion measures. Such a heroic collection supplies as stunning a store of information on the subject as is probably available under one cover. However, the sheer quantity of material is (paradoxically) at once its major flaw. The articles appear as a random compilation rather than a systematic arrangement based on predetermined categories.

Finally, the book concludes with a comprehensive list of references and citations gathered from all the papers. Such an impressive listing provides the reader with an extraordinary and rich supply of resource material.

Some thoughtful editing would not only have eliminated the few weaknesses, but would have added to the clarity and thrust of the entire collection. The articles represent a broad cross section of educational and psychoeducational disciplines and furnish a multifaceted prospective of piagetian theory and implications.

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ARGON LASER PHOTOCOAGULATION—H. Christian Zweng, MD, Palo Alto Retinal Medical Group, Inc.; Clinical Professor of Surgery (Ophthalmology), Stanford University School of Medicine; Hunter L. Little, MD, Palo Alto Retinal Medical Group, Inc.; Associate Clinical Professor of Surgery (Ophthalmology), Stanford University School of Medicine; in collaboration with Arthur Vassiliadis, PhD, Staff Scientist, Palo Alto Retinal Research Foundation, Menlo Park, California. The C. V. Mosby Company, Publishers, 3301 Washington Blvd., St. Louis (63103), 1977. 319 pages, \$42.50.

This 319-page book describes the indications, contraindications, and complications of argon laser photocoagulation.

The text is well-written and is accompanied by illustrations which are good to excellent. A conversational and clinically oriented tone is maintained throughout the extensive review of the authors' experience during 11 years of argon laser work.

The book begins with a definition of light and lasers, proceeds to photocoagulation effects upon retinal histology in health and disease, and then describes in detail suggested routines for treatment of the various types of retinal degenerative, inflammatory, and vasculoproliferative pathology.

The history of laser retinal photocoagulation has been one of controversy. The idea of producing destructive lesions as a form of beneficial therapy seemed at first to be contradictory. Particularly for degenerative diseases which tend to progress irrespective of treatment, decisions to treat rather than to observe demand that a degree of retardation or stabilization of disease rather than improvement must be accepted as successful therapy. Authors Zweng, Little and Vassiliadis are innovators, and introduced argon slit lamp photocoagulation to the ophthalmologic community in 1966. They have been active proponents of argon laser therapy. Their clinical experience has been extensive and they have documented their results well. Importantly, the authors emphasize that proper utilization of argon laser photocoagulation is not without hazard and that complications must be avoided by more clearly defined indications and contraindications to treatment.

This book is intended for clinicians and is very useful. It presents a balanced viewpoint on a number of controversial subjects. It is regrettable that the senior author (Zweng) died last year, for he contributed greatly to the implementation of argon laser therapy in clinical ophthalmology.

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